

MOLIÈRE, the name assumed by Jean-Baptiste Poquelin, who was born in Paris in 1622. Studied law at University of Orléans. Attracted to theatre, formed a small troupe and toured the provinces acting plays written by himself, 1645-58. Died in 1673.

MOLIERE'S COMEDIES

IN TWO VOLUMES: VOLUME II

INTRODUCTION BY

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DON JOHN, OR THE FEAST OF
THE STATUE
(A COMEDY)

DON JOHN, or THE FEAST OF THE STATUE, a Comedy of Five Acts
in Prose, acted at Paris at the Theatre of the Palace - Royal,
15 February, 1665.

It was not by his own choice, that Molière wrote upon the subject of *Don John, or The Feast of the Statue*. The Italians, who borrowed it from the Spanish, had brought it upon their stage in France with vast success. A villain odious for his crimes and hypocrisy, the silly miracle of a moving and speaking statue, and the extravagant scene of Hell did not disgust the vulgar, who are always fond of wonders.

In 1660, De Villiers, a comedian of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, acted it in verse, and Molière performed it in prose in 1665. His company, who had set him upon this work, were sufficiently punished for their bad choice by the little success it met with; which might be occasioned, perhaps, either by the prejudice which reigned then against comedies of five acts written in prose, being stronger than the spirit of whim, which had drawn the public in crowds to the Italians, and to the Hôtel de Bourgogne; or else by their being offended with some hazardous passages in it, which the author suppressed the second time of its being acted.

A company which was formed in 1673, out of that of the Marais, and that of the Palace-Royal, which were both broke, acted Molière's *Feast of the Statue*, which Thomas Corneille had turned into verse at the Hôtel de Guénégaud in 1677, under which form it drew a prodigious concourse of spectators, and 'tis that alone which is played at present.

ACTORS

DON JOHN, *son to Don Lewis.*
ELVIRA, *wife to Don John.*
GUSMAN, *gentleman-usher to Elvira.*
DON CARLOS, }
DON ALONZO, } *brothers to Elvira.*
DON LEWIS, *father to Don John.*
FRANCISCO, *a poor man.*
CHARLOTTA, }
MATHURINA, } *country-girls.*
PIERROT, *a country-fellow.*
THE STATUE OF THE GOVERNOR.
SGANAREL, }
VIOLETTE, } *Lackeys to Don John.*
RAGOTIN, }
MR. DIMANCHE, *a tradesman.*
RAMÉE, *a bully.*
GHOST.

SCENE: *Sicily.*